

February 23, 2021

Chair Ed McBroom
Senate Natural Resources Committee
Binsfield Office Building
Post Office Box 30036
Lansing, MI 48909-7536

Re: Statement from Michigan animal care, protection and conservation organizations opposing SR 15

Dear Chairman McBroom and honorable members of the Senate Natural Resources Committee:

On behalf of the Michigan voters we represent, the undersigned coalition of organizations asks you to oppose Senate Resolution 15 in the Senate Natural Resources Commission. A hearing on this bill is scheduled before your committee on February 24th, 2021 at 8:00 am.

As humane and conservation organizations that dedicate substantial time and resources to improving the lives of Michigan's animals, we believe that Senate Resolution 15 runs contrary to our mission and values. A 2021 wolf hunting and trapping season would not be based on the best available science, ignores the will of Michigan voters and Michigan's tribal communities, and perpetuates the idea that hunting an animal for a trophy is an acceptable and desirable way to interact with our state's wildlife.

The Michigan DNR has already begun an extensive planning process to update Michigan's wolf management plan. Urging a hunt this year when the wolf population has remained stable for a decade, livestock depredations are minimal and there is no documented risk to human safety is unjustifiable. Wildlife is a public trust that belongs to all Michiganders. Urging the hunting and trapping of important apex predators without justification runs contrary to the North American Model of Wildlife Management as well as the will of Michigan voters who twice opposed wolf hunting initiatives across the state.

Much like the dogs who share our homes, wolves are highly intelligent and social animals with strong family ties and clear ability to suffer. In fact, they are 99.9% genetically identical to our canine companions. Perhaps that is partly why so many voters are against the trophy hunting of wolves and would see the rush to establish a hunt as violating principals of sound scientific management. Instead, the majority of residents would rather enjoy and spend their money appreciating wolves as a part of Michigan's beautiful natural landscape and critical and delicate ecosystems.

We hope that you will stand with the majority of Michiganders who appreciate the value of our state's wildlife as important members of our ecosystem and who wish to see their management conducted with thoughtfulness, research, respect and compassion.

Sincerely,

Ahimsa Safe Haven, Onsted
All Species Kinship, Battle Creek
Attorneys for Animals, Canton
Barn Sanctuary, Chelsea
Bird Center of Washtenaw County, Ann Arbor
Chubby Goat Acres, Schoolcraft
Detroit Zoological Society, Royal Oak
Harbor Humane, West Olive
Humane Society of Huron Valley, Ann Arbor
Humane Society of Macomb, Utica

Kalamazoo Cat Café and Rescue, Kalamazoo
Last Dance Rescue Ranch, Charlevoix
Michigan Animal Rescue Shelter Network
Michigan Humane, Detroit
Out-Back Wildlife Rehabilitation Center, Ottawa Lake
Paws for Life Rescue and Adoption, Troy
Richland Animal Rescue & Equine Shelter, Richland
Save a Soul Rescue, Kalkaska
Songbird Protection Coalition
SPCA of Southwest Michigan, Kalamazoo

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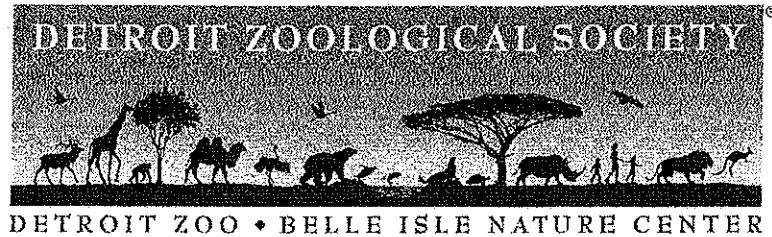
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February 24, 2021

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The Detroit Zoological Society opposes Senate Resolution #15, which urges the Natural Resources Commission to authorize, and the Department of Natural Resources to organize, wolf hunting and trapping in Michigan, beginning in 2021.

As you know, the DNR is planning an update of the State's wolf management plan, which includes a public attitude survey, scientific review, and input on the plan from public and Tribal stakeholders, which is expected midyear 2021. This critical work is necessary before responsible decisions about managing wolves can be made.

According to the DNR, the state agency responsible for management of Michigan's wildlife, there are only around 695 wolves in Michigan, and the population has remained relatively stable over the last ten years. There is no science-based need to reduce the population size. Additionally, and contrary to the resolution, trophy hunting of wolves will likely cause pack disruption and disintegration, which increases the risk of hungry, displaced wolves coming into conflict with livestock and potentially humans.

The Detroit Zoological Society is a leader in science-based field conservation. We are engaged in field research and conservation on six continents, and we understand the importance of science, and of compassion and reason, in managing the delicate balance of ecological systems and human/wildlife conflict in our increasingly human-dominated world. We strongly oppose Senate Resolution 15 and the unscientific and cruel wildlife policy it seeks to drive in Michigan.

Ron L. Kagan
 Executive Director/CEO

Scott Carter
 Chief Life Sciences Officer

Wolf Hunting & Trapping in Michigan's U.P.

First, I would like to clarify one point – Michigan's wolf population is not Michigan's, it is the Upper Peninsula's. Today I will speak and present scientific data only on harvest regulations for hunting and trapping of wolves.

Should wolves be hunted and/or trapped in the U.P. to control their numbers? The answer to that is absolutely, YES. The MDNR/NRC seems to believe that there isn't enough science to make intelligent decisions on harvest regulations. They would rather make harvest decisions by bringing together stake holder groups and use that body to make management decisions based on opinion (wolf lovers vs non-lovers). There is plenty of science and/or harvest data from other states or countries to prove exactly what should be done.

Wisconsin has the best data available on the internet for easy access (WDNR). Other states include Minnesota, Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, Alaska, and our neighbor where the wolves in the Lake States originated from - Canada. Interested individuals shouldn't only look at harvest data but should also research each state or country to determine what that data is based on.

Wisconsin's data shows that wolves are responsible for more than 31% of deer killed in 17 northern counties. Also, they kill more than gun-deer hunters in the four-county area of Iron, Ashland, Douglas and Forest. Wisconsin state law sets a wolf season to begin the first Saturday in November through the last day of February except if the wolf is listed under the federal Endangered Species Act. Wisconsin just started their 2021 harvest on Monday lasting until the quota is met (200) or the last day of Feb.

On January 3, 2021 wolves were delisted again in the Lake States turning management control over to the states. Michigan (really the U.P.) reached its goal of a viable population of 200 wolves for 5 consecutive years in 2004. In 2012 Michigan's legislature enacted Public Act 520 which designated the wolf as a game species. In 2013 Public Act 20 was signed into law which gave the NRC the authority to designate the wolf a game species and regulate the hunting and trapping of wolves. Currently according to the MDNR the minimum winter population (lowest during the year) is 695 divided among 143 packs.

Wolves do have an impact on deer and moose populations, and this impact, in combination with factors such as severe winters have reduced U.P. populations to historic low levels. Michigan (DNR-NRC) now has the ability to influence this system by reducing the wolf population and allowing the deer and moose populations to recover from multiple severe winters.

Reproduction rates, immigration and emigration are the factors in a wolf populations ability to compensate for human-induced mortality. Harvest studies conducted in Canada, Alaska, Minnesota, Montana, Wisconsin and Idaho have set the benchmark for wolf

management. Social and biological science relevant to wolf harvest is generally agreed that a 30% harvest will have NO impact on a free-ranging wolf population. Studies also show that historically in the Great Lakes area declining numbers of prey (bison, elk, deer, caribou and beaver) caused wolf populations to decline prior to bounties being established in the 1800's, not regular hunting or trapping.

The DNR/NRC is supposed to be using scientific data to determine management goals/objectives, in so stating, a wolf harvest season should be set beginning on Nov. 15th, 2021 (hunting & trapping) and ending the last day of Feb. or until the quota is met (200). Tracking the quota should be done by mandatory registration within 48 hrs. of the kill and upon reaching the goal the season would be shut down (other states do this with all kinds of game). Research also shows that the first season will be approx. 50%/50% taken by hunting/trapping. After the first season trapping will out weigh the harvest by 70% to 80% (wolves learn quick).

Wolves need to be managed not just for limiting game species but for many other important reasons which included, but not limited to: local economic revenue (hunting seasons), property values (camps), wildlife viewing opportunities (tourism), livestock predation and pet predation.

Other important data:

- wolves kill a minimum of 20 (full-size) deer per year.
- Wolves kill 80% to 90% of all moose that they attack (usually conducted over several days).
- Wolves usually have 4 to 6 pups per year.
- Normal life span is 13 years.
- Wolf pack usually consists of alpha pair, young of the year, some of last year's young, few older wolves.

**By: Rory Mattson
Delta Conservation District
Natural Resource Specialist**